

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract: In the public administration reform process, there are two approaches, one of which implies a series of smaller projects that together give the total score, as a „flock of dolphins“. The second approach is „whale hunting“, and it represents one general strategy of the public administration for whose implementation a very long period is necessary. In Slovenia, the preparation of the reform with this approach has lasted five years, while in Croatia it practically has not been completed yet. In Serbia, a combined system has been chosen, which implies a series of projects, along with the constitution of a uniform strategy, so that all the relations and changes would be harmonized.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information System – (IS) is a set of activities for information processing, together with associated organizational resources, such as human, technical and financial, which provide and distribute the information. Links between objects and links between the system and environment are realized by information exchange. Each information system consists of the database and set of programmes that provide various classes of users to access the data in that database so that they could perform their daily tasks. Based on that information, the information system can be defined as a set of techniques and technologies, methods and procedures for proper planning collection, preparation, transmission, warehousing and procession of data, based on the application of computers, as well as distribution and presenting of information for the use and decision-making. Intensive development of information systems begins with introduction of computers and other equipment to the processing of so-called business information, which was so far performed by the people. Development of information systems as a whole has its basis, its boundaries and its motives, and today, the systems theory and informatics serve as a basis from which the design concepts of information systems development are derived. Information systems that use the computers and information technology (IT) in this field are called Computer-Based Information Systems – CBIS.

The task of an information system is to process the input information into output information, useful for making certain decisions (Figure 1). Feedback has a task to control whether the output is a real value, and if the real expected value is not obtained in the output, it comes to the verification and correction of the input data (the existence of an error in the input or processing is verified). There is always a possibility of error in input information, as well as the processing). Since it is clear that within the work of an information system, there is a constant risk of error, for e.g. the result of processing are wrong and useless, we can find ourselves in front of a very unpleasant dilemma: whether to trust the data that we receive from the computer or not and who has made the mistake, was it computer or the man. The experience shows us that a cause of the wrong results is most frequently in the mistakes of the man, whether because the wrong data have been entered or because the program was wrong. The errors that usually occur when entering the data into computer are simply the result of superficiality, inattention or fatigue of a man and they can easily be eliminated. The second type of errors, i.e. the errors in the programme have deeper causes: most frequently, it is the complexity of the programme that can be so big that a programmer practically cannot control the whole program

anymore. Even when it is obvious that there was an error somewhere in the programme, it is very difficult to determine where it exactly is, and if it is found and corrected, there exists a big possibility that the corrected error will be fatal for the execution of another part of the programme. The exit from the difficulties that come from programme's complexity consists of the structure that is so clear that the programmer can easily understand it (application of structural programming when developing a programme) and the programme should be composed of modules, which are relatively independent of each other, so that they can be processed separately, independently from the whole (application of a modular programming when developing a programme) [1-10].

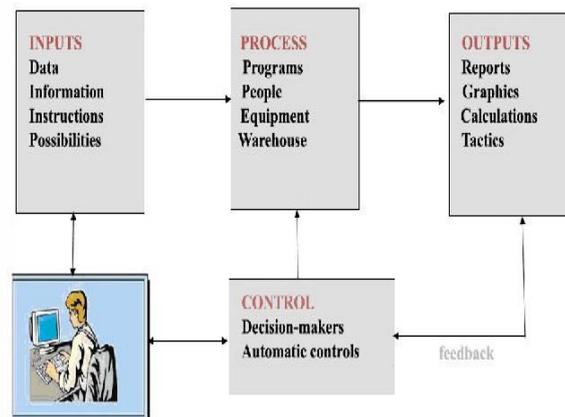


Figure 1. Architecture of the information system (IS)

2. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

One of the key parts of each „transition package“ is also the public administration reform. It is about an extremely important, but, at the same time, a very complex reform undertaking. It was fully proved in the case of Serbia, as well. At the end of 2003, Serbian Agency for Public Administration Development has asked the Statskonsult from Norway to prepare a report on the progress of public administration reform in Serbia. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has agreed to finance its drafting. Study, i.e. the report consists of five chapters: What preceded the reform – heritage and challenges; Description of the reform – achievements and failures; Assessment of the reform; Explanation of the reform; Adaptation of the reform. Four detailed appendixes are also an integral part of the study.

Three types of closely related questions were analyzed: how far has the public administration reform in Serbia advanced in the period from 2001-2004 (until the March 2004. when the new government was formed); what has encouraged and what has obstructed this reform; should the reform agenda and reform process be adjusted and, if the answer is confirmative, in which way it should be done? In order to answer each of these questions, the authors of the study Svein Eriksen and Dag Solumsmoen have used three groups of data: published materials, interviews with key decision-makers and data that were obtained by the research that involved all the employed state officials in five ministries. In this analysis, the authors were focused on three variables that were of crucial importance in the literature on institutional changes in Central and Eastern Europe. Those are: the „structure“ (actually institutional capacity available to state leaders), leadership and external factors. They have based the evaluation of the results of public administration reform in Serbia on two types of data: evaluations from the part of those people who were directly involved in the reform or they have observed it at close, as well as the comparison of the progress in development of general administration capacities of Serbia with Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia. The authors offer a brief review of the state of public

administration in the period from 1945 until the 1990s, and then they further orient themselves on the period of Milošević's rule. What has the government formed in 2001 found? According to one study, to which the authors refer, the following was determined: weak mechanisms for inter-ministerial coordination; lack of capacities for strategic and political development; administrative culture based on the rules with aversion to risks; widely spread problem of motivation; high degree of politicization; strong centralization of the bodies that make decisions; lack of administrative equipment and infrastructure. Initial dilemma was whether to make a discontinuity with the past or not. The authors consider that it can be concluded that political discontinuity is followed by institutional continuity. New Serbian government has basically accepted entire inherited legislation and took over all the existing state institutions. Shortly after the change of government, the Government has established three new bodies in order for those bodies to assist the reform of public administration. New Ministry for Public Administration was also formed (2002), as well as two dozen of agencies out of the ministries.

The results of the public administration reform can be defined a modest. The authors believe that the key quality achieved in this period is a significant entry of new people in the composition of fully employed. What problems have occurred? During the three-year period, the constitutional system has become confused, and the line between law and politics has become blurred. Besides, Serbian ministries can be defined as centralized bureaucratic, with an emphasis on control and decision-making from top to bottom. In one word, the leadership and structure have made problems and constraints to reform efforts. Leadership has negative impact because it was fragmented and its attention and energy was consumed by other issues. The structure was such that it was not creating sufficient capacity for coordination, cooperation, communication and development of the politics. The external factors, i.e. donor's help, more frequently had positive rather than negative effect on administrative changes. However, it was a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the creation of new possibilities. Central conclusion of the report is that Serbian government system is characteristic for its weak mechanisms of inter-institutional coordination. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the coordination and communication by subtly harmonized activities, as well as to achieve the improvement of innovations and development of public politics.

3. PROFESSIONALIZATION AND DEPOLITICALIZATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – experiences of Serbia

In the year 2004, the Government adopted a Strategy of Public Administration Reform, which has created the preconditions for essential changes in this field [11]. The Strategy has defined 5 basic principles of the reform:

- The principle of decentralization;
- The principle of depoliticization;
- The principle of professionalization;
- The principle of rationalization;
- The principle of modernization.

In addition, the Strategy also in part deals with modern human potentials management.

After the strategy, a set of reform regulations was also prepared and adopted:

Laws:

- Civil Service Law;
- Law on Civil Servants;
- Law on Salaries of Civil Servants and appointees;

Regulations:

- Regulation on the establishment of the service for human resource management;
- Regulation on preparation of personnel plan in civil service;
- Regulation on classification and criteria for jobs description of civil servants;
- Regulations on classification of appointees' jobs;
- Regulation on implementation of internal and public competition for filling the work position;
- Regulation on the evaluation of civil servants.

Depoliticization of the government is widespread and only the functions of the ministers and secretaries of the state are political functions, according to the new regulations – all the others are state officials and appointees.

State officials are classified into those on the positions and those that occupy the places of performers (Figure 2), when we use:

- Competitions,
- Regulation on the criteria for selection to positions in public competitions.

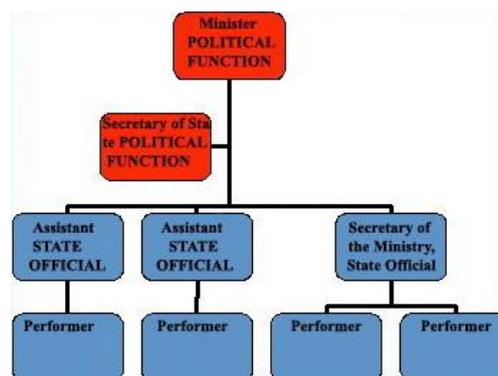


Figure 2. Government of the Republic of Serbia – Human Resource Management Service [11]

The way to fill in the job positions is performed when we call:

- Internal competitions
- Public competitions.

4. CONCLUSION

The role of the Human Resource Management Service in filling the job positions is performed on the basis of:

a) Position,

The Service performs all professional jobs for the needs of the High Civil Service Council and selection committee.

b) Executive job positions,

State official from the Service is a member of the selection committee for each executive position that is filled in any body.

The international cooperation and regional networking and exchange of experiences and personnel are especially significant.

Basic stand in presenting the management is thought-aware managerial activity of the people in various forms and types of organizations and institutions of national and international (global) level and significance. Changes (physical, social and economic)

continuously condition the changes of a more purposeful activity and organization of people, organizations, social communities and systems, so that they could as better as possible satisfy their needs (living standards).

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